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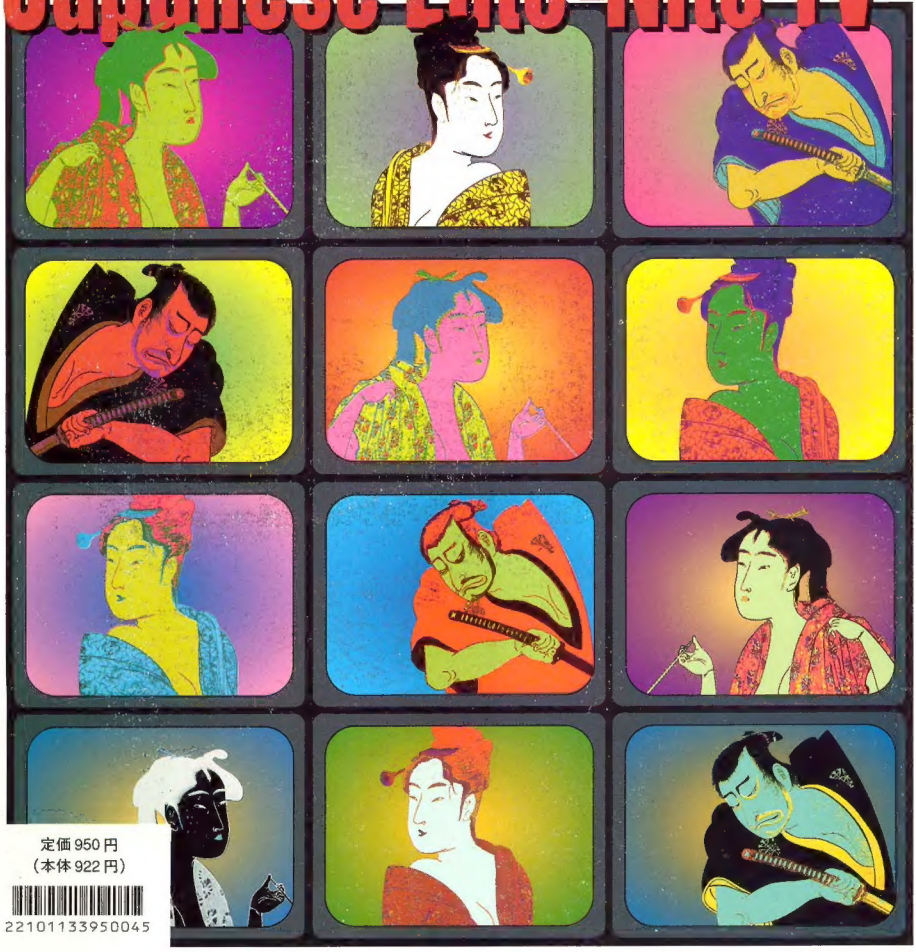

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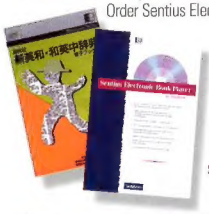

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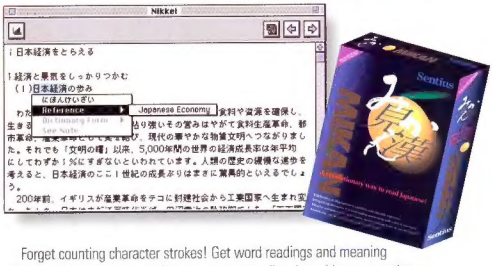

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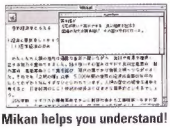

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Mangajin is a made-up word combining *manga* ("comics/cartoons") and *jin* ("person/people"). It sounds almost like the English word "magazine" as rendered in Japanese—*magajin*. All of the Japanese manga in *Mangajin* were created in Japan, by Japanese cartoonists, for Japanese readers.

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MANGAJIN

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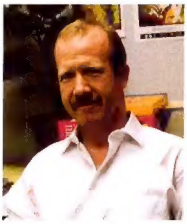

Some people are surprised to see that there are no Japanese editors on our full-time staff. Actually, that is part of our concept. Not that we have anything against Japanese editors, but we believe that one reason for Japan's inscrutable image is that Japanese people are not especially good at explaining their own culture to others. Sometimes they don't have a good idea what needs to be explained (like the fish trying to explain water), and other times they don't have the English language skills to explain it in a way that foreigners can understand, or the knack to explain it in a way that is entertaining.

The old "snow job" approach, in which Japanese people try to present only what they consider to be the positive aspects of their culture (tea ceremony, Zen, Noh, excessively polite speech forms in Japanese language class, etc.), is rapidly becoming a thing of the past. Even the most conservative Japanese realize that they need to be perceived as human beings, and the spectrum of human interests includes more than flower arranging and old temples. In that sense, *Mangajin* is certainly not unique. Even the Overseas Public Relations Division of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs provides grants for projects such as documentaries on the Tokyo rock scene.

The unique thing about *Mangajin* is that all of our full-time editorial staff members, and most of our contributors, are bi-lingual, bi-cultural Americans. Of course, we consult with Japanese collaborators all during the process (a special nod here to our Japanese partner and representative, Moteki-san), and we have native speakers of Japanese as checkers in the quality control process, but we essentially rely on native speakers of English for our translations and explanations of Japanese culture. Our goal is to make the subject not only understandable, but also enjoyable. We hope you are pleased with our results.

Vaughan P. Simmons

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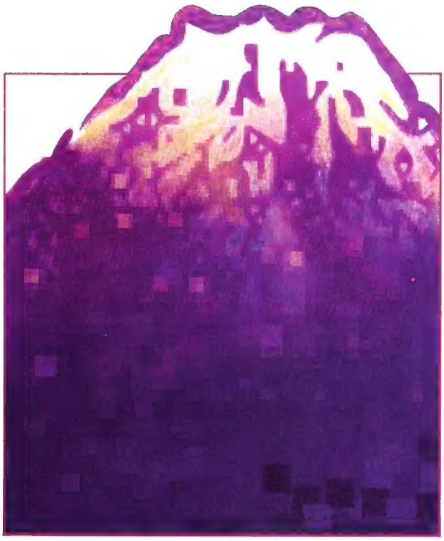

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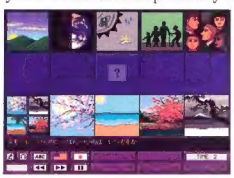

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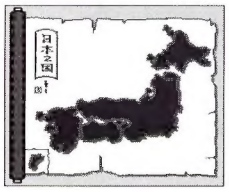

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My Neighbor Totoro

Mangajin's review of the English version of the popular Japanese anime *Tonari no Totoro* (*Mangajin* No. 39) raises a number of interesting points which I would like to discuss further.

In her review, Terra Brockman points out that elements of tenderness, subtlety, depth, and humor present in the original are lost in the English version, due largely to problems in translation and the quality of voices used in the dubbing. In the English version, the use of a high-class speaking style to replace rural accents and a pervasive element of chattiness all but obliterate the down-to-earth nature of the original. Consequently, the human warmth and appeal of the characters are also lost. Brockman remarks upon the inherent shortcomings of translation; certain Japanese expressions simply do not have English equivalents.

In the original, the repetition of the phrase "It was a dream . . . but it wasn't a dream" alludes to the mystical space in which reality and fantasy converge. As Brockman points out, in the English version this can only be interpreted as childish contradiction. This difference arises from the disparity between the linguistic characteristics of English, in which the subjunctive and indicative moods are clearly distinguished, and those of Japanese, in which they are not. It also arises from the contradictory perceptions of reality that are generated by that disparity. In the world of Japanese language, there is no border between the world of reality and the world of dreams (i.e., the world of spirits). There is a belief that reality can be seen as a dream.

There are limitations, however, to Brockman's idea that *Tonari no Totoro* belongs to a lineage of strange and eerie works, sharing a common thread with the works of Kawabata and Japanese girls' manga. I believe most Japanese would be surprised to see *Tonari no Totoro* categorized as a horror film. This work is definitely not a horror film, nor is it one of Lafcadio Hearn's Buddhist ghost stories.

In Brockman's view, the theme of the film is sickness, horror, and death. Totoro, the spirit of an old tree, is a creature of Hades. Satsuki is led by this being from the world of the dead to meet her sister, Mei, who has disappeared (and whose death is suggested). They board another apparition of Hades, a cat-bus, and fly through the sky, traveling over telephone lines, to arrive outside the window of the hospital room occupied by Satsuki's ailing mother. Satsuki's parents, who are still alive, cannot see them. In short, to Brockman, this is a kind of tour of the spirit world, like that of Dante's. The mother senses the presence of spirits, naturally indicating, according to Brockman's interpretation, that she is close to death.

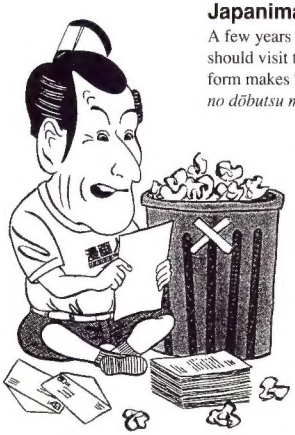
Why does this sort of misunderstanding arise?

Tonari no Totoro is grounded in a Japanese worldview that accepts bowing one's head and talking to an old tree that has lived through numerous winters as a completely natural act. From ancient times, Japanese linguistic expressions have accommodated the presence of non-existent entities, including the dead, in the same dimension as the realm of the living. In *Totoro* as well, the world of the dead and living exist together in the same dimension; there are no suggestions of death. We should

(continued on page 75)

Correction

In our article "Gaijin in Manga," featured in *Mangajin* No. 43, we inadvertently used the wrong kanji in the title of the book *Kachō Shima Kōsaku*. The correct title is 課長島耕作, not 課長島交錯. We regret the error.



Japanimals

A few years ago I was trying to explain to a Japanese tour company why Japanese tourists should visit the Australian animal park that I work for. I had just learned how the *-tai* verb form makes "want to (verb)" so I quite innocently said, *"Watashi wa Nihonjin wa Australia no dōbutsu mitai to omoimasu,"* meaning, "I think Japanese people would like to see Australian animals," but actually saying, "I think that Japanese look like Australian animals." The agent laughed and said that he could see what I was trying to say but I should rephrase it for the next appointment.

ROBERT FRIEDLER
Chapel Hill, Australia

Organic film

When I first arrived in Japan, I had to wait a couple of weeks for my first paycheck. I wanted film for my camera, but everything seemed so expensive—especially since I was still living off the money I brought from America. So, I went into a local photo shop and said, *"Yasai firumu wa arimasu ka?"* (Do you have vegetable film?) What I meant to say, of course, was, *"Yasui firumu wa arimasu ka?"* (Do you have cheap film?) The owner of the store smiled at me, picked out a roll of film and said, *"Tada"* (free). I guess he felt sorry for the new foreigner!

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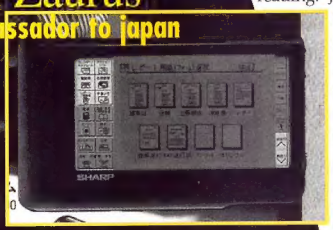

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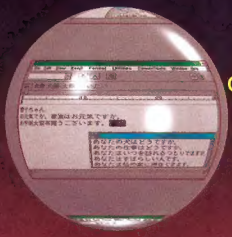

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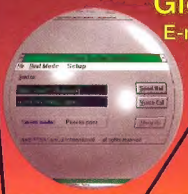

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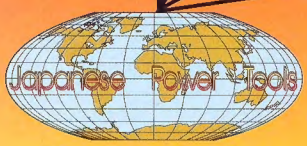

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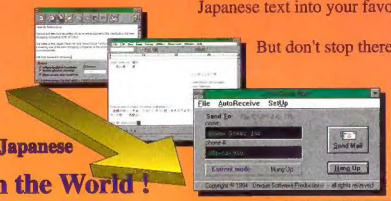

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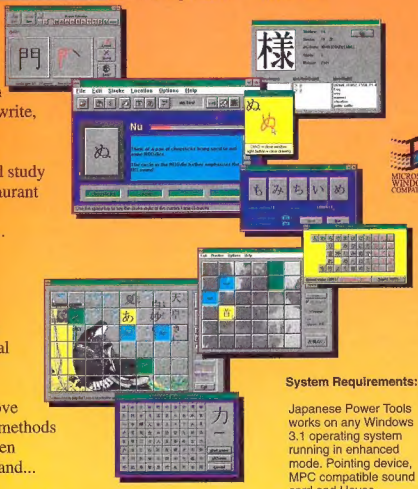

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シゲキックス
Shigekikkusu
Candy with a "Kick"

For reasons unknown, Japan produces some of the most bitter candy known to man. Witness the expression on the man's face on the package at left—not to mention his lightning-bolt hair. Clearly he has just popped into his mouth a *Shigekikkusu Sūpa Minto* ("super mint") candy—a tiny, green, gummy ball that packs a powerful, face-scrunching punch.

Shigekikkusu is a made-up word loaded with meanings. *Shigeki* (刺激) means a "stimulus," "impetus," or "spur." Here it shares a *ki* with *kikku*, taken from the English word "kick" and carrying the same sense of "bite" or "zippiness" as in English. *Kikku* also encompasses the verb *kiku* (利く), which means to "take hold" or "have an effect" (e.g., *kono kusuri wa kiku* = "this medicine is effective").

かくれん棒
Kakurenbō
"Hide & Seek" Sticks

Their name and appearance notwithstanding, these color pencils are not for kids; they're handy utensils for home repairs. According to the copy—written in English—one can cover up "scratches, nicks, chips, cigarette burns and other defects on wood, leather, and plastics by rubbing into defect."

Kakurenbō, written with the kanji 隠れん坊, is the Japanese word for the game "hide-and-seek." *Kakureru* (隠れる) is to "hide" (*kakuren* is short for *kakureru*), and 坊 is the character for "bonze" or, as a suffix, "kind of person." For example, *abarenbō* (暴れん坊) = "wild/rough" + "person" → "ruffian/hooligan"; *kechinbō* (けち ん坊) = "stingy" + "person" → "tightwad." So *kakurenbō* literally means "hiding person." Here the *bō* is written with the character 棒 ("stick"), giving us the made-up word "hiding-stick"—as in a stick that hides blemishes.

Further, since *kakuren* is written in hiragana (かくれん) instead of kanji (隠れん), the *kaku* part can be thought of as the verb for "write" (書く), making yet another pun.

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POLITICAL CARTOON

From the Asahi Shinbun (朝日新聞)

片隅の地方選挙

小島　功

Caption:

片隅　　の 地方　選挙
kata-sumi no chihō senkyo
corner/nook = local elections
The in-a-corner local elections
The local elections that nobody cared about.

(Artist) 小島　功
Kojima Ko

- *kata-sumi no* ～ (lit. "in-a-corner ～") is an expression implying that the subject in question has been "marginalized/pushed aside/relegated to obscurity." Here, it also refers to the fact that the campaigning politician has been literally relegated to a corner of the TV screen.
- the name 功 is often read Isao, but *Kō* is written in katakana over the signature.

世界一安全な国から　一寸先は闇（やみ）の国へ

小島　功

Caption:

世界一　　安全な　国　から
sekai-ichi anzen na kuni kara
world's no. 1 peaceful/safe country from
一寸先　は　闇　（やみ）の　国　へ
issun saki wa yami (yami) no kuni e
1 *sun* ahead as for darkness (furigana) = country to
From (being) the safest country in the world . . . to (being) a country where one inch ahead is darkness.
From the safest country in the world . . . to a country plunged in darkness.

(Artist) 小島　功
Kojima Kō

- *sekai-ichi* (lit. "world one") plus an adjective means "number one in the world" in terms of that adjective ＞"～-est in the world."
- *sun* (寸) is an old unit of measurement, with *issun* (一寸, "one *sun*") equivalent to 1.193 inches. *Issun saki wa yami* is an idiomatic expression meaning "the future is dark/murky/unpredictable."
- ～ *kara* ～ *e* forms a pattern similar to the English "from ～ to ～."

Whether by luck or by design, Japan has long managed to avoid the increasingly sophisticated and hard-to-control violence plaguing so many other countries in the modern era. However, the recent terrorist attack on the Tokyo subway system seems to have changed all of that, practically overnight. The Japanese are still reeling from the shock.

The cartoon on top, from March 30, shows the seriousness with which the Japanese are taking the subway attack. In these days of constant political change, local elections would normally be a big deal; now, with a mysterious religious cult threatening public safety and troops of policemen running through the streets dressed for chemical warfare, they seem barely worthy of note.

The bottom cartoon, from April 1, conveys the sense of dread that this event and its aftermath have visited upon the Japanese. Since early times, the Japanese have associated their country with the sun and all that it represents symbolically. Here, however, the large, glowing sun that graces the Japanese flag seems to have taken on the rather daunting appearance of a gaping black hole. The riot shield and canary in Prime Minister Murayama's hands seem as if they will afford pitifully small protection as he treads slowly and carefully but inexorably into the yawning darkness.

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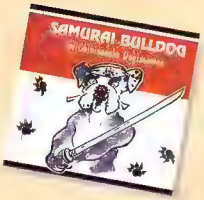

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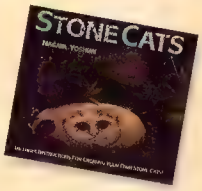

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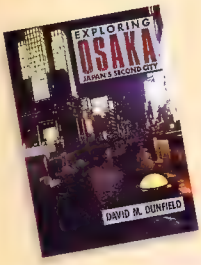

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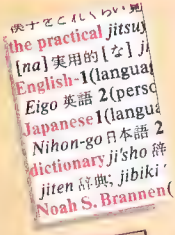

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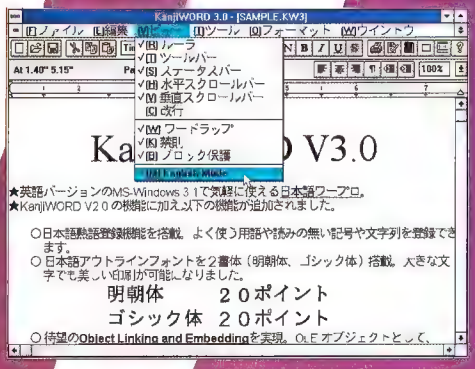

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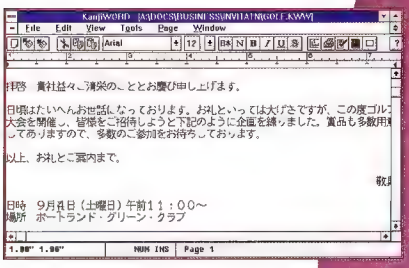

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Anything Goes On
Late-Night TV

Perhaps the most exhilarating part of journeying abroad is stumbling upon the completely unexpected. One might think this experience hard to come by in Japan, given the American media's obsession with things Japanese, but it isn't. Japan is full of surprises. One of the first I encountered was on my television screen, late one sleepless night. Bombarded by images of bare breasts and T-backed buns, I had my first real glimpse into a Japan that is not discussed in classrooms back home.

Indeed, Japan's openness to the naked body, and acts such nakedness may provoke, have long shocked visitors from the West. In *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*, a beautiful travelogue from the summer of 1878, Isabella Bird could never quite come to grips with how *undressed* people were. Conversely, the Japanese were shocked at the way Isabella and other expatriates dressed in full Victorian dignity despite the unusual heat and humidity that summer. As Ian Buruma showed so well in *A Japanese Mirror*, such a contrast in attitudes can be traced as far back as Adam and Eve and the Japanese deities. Whereas Adam saw eternal damnation with his first peek at Eve's privates, the Japanese gods reveled when Ama no Uzume no Mikoto began the first documented erotic dance in history in order to bring the Sun Goddess out of hiding.

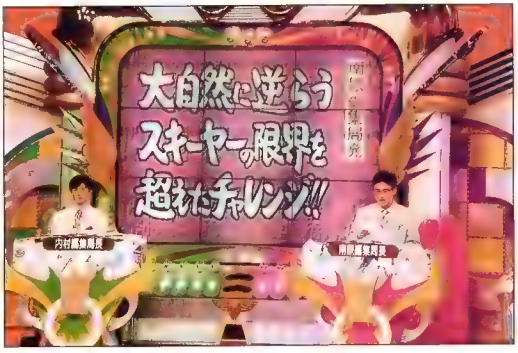
All photos courtesy of Nippon Television Network Corporation

Feeling Fine With Downtown, *featuring the well-known comedy team Downtown, is one of the most popular shows on television*

Although the Japanese learned quickly to cover themselves when taught by Westerners about the inherent naughtiness of nakedness, the view that unclothed bodies and sex are innocent facts of life never disappeared entirely. It remained in movies and in books, manga, and magazines, and in the past few years has made a remarkably strong comeback, thanks in part to the softening of pornography laws regarding what is called *hea nūdo* (ヘアヌード, "hair nude"). Previously in Japan, in an unusual show of prudery, no picture could be published which showed pubic hair. Publishers eventually saw a way around this ban, using the fact that exceptions had often been made for Western works of art. Pointing out that certain photographs can also be works of art, they argued that such photos should be allowed to bare all. When a famous actress, Miyazawa Rie, posed thus for a book in 1991 (photographed in, and called, *Santa Fe*), it became wildly successful. Television producers have not yet found a way to bring total nudity to late-night TV, but they are trying—very hard.

Let's imagine an American executive and his family sitting at home in front of the television in their new Tokyo apartment. While downing a pizza, they get brave and switch from old American reruns on cable to local programming. It's 7:00 PM, and they are just in time for *Sazae-san* (サザエさん), a family-style animated show that has entertained Japanese of all ages for decades. Sazae, the main character (*sazae* is a type of shell—everyone in the family is named after a marine product), is a sort of Doris Day, fumbling happily through the daily routines of a three-generation family. Sazae's cheerful family forms the perfect *ie* (家, "clan")—they are pure, simple, and apparently unaware of the world's difficult problems.

Our American Mom and Dad are tired, however. For Dad it has been a long day of silent negotiations at the office, and it took Mom hours to figure out how to order the pizza. So, they fall asleep on the couch. They have been comforted by the sights of *Sazae-san*, which reminded them somehow of American suburbia circa 1955, and made them feel content to let the kids soak in a little more Japanese culture from the TV set.



An episode from Contributions! News Flash Kingdom. *The large sign reads: "A Challenge to Nature-Defying Skiiers to Exceed the Limits!!"*

But when they wake at around 11 PM, they find little Bob and Sue absorbed in something worlds apart from the childlike innocence of the seafood family. Wide-eyed, the kids are taking in the end of a

• hard to come by 得難い *egatai* • expatriate 外国居住者、ここでは在日外国人 *gaikoku kyoju-sha, koko de wa zainichi gaikokujin* • deities (ここでは日本神話の) 神々 *(koko de wa Nihon shinwa no) kamigami* • eternal damnation 永遠の断罪 *eien no danzai* • prudery 厳格さ・堅苦しさ *genkakusa/katakurushisa* • down 食べる(俗語) *taberu (zokugo)* • suburbia 郊外住宅地の文化 *kogai jutaku-chi no bunka* • take in (テレビ等に)見入る *(terebi nado ni) miiru*

segment in which a happy man is measuring the breasts of ten vivacious young women. Just after that, a well-dressed woman begins to explain the latest in fashion, the "no-top look," while wiggling bottoms assail the screen from every possible angle. Horrors! The TV is turned off, and the kids are sent directly to bed.

Mom and Dad may feel outraged at the demeaning treatment of women, at the decadence of Japanese TV morals—but if so, they may be overlooking an important aspect of Japanese culture.

Late-night TV has roots deep in traditional popular culture, specifically in early kabuki theater. The word for "TV show" in Japanese, *bangumi* (番組), originally referred to a "program" for a kabuki performance, which generally consisted of five unrelated acts from five different plays. Such a mix was considered desirable, since the emphasis was not on a uniform plot or fidelity to a script, but rather on pure performance. Actors were expected to live up to their fame, both onstage and off. Late-night TV shares these qualities; although hardly as ornate as kabuki, shows tend to have a very loose format, and the lack of a script ensures they stay "live." The wild and extraordinary nature of late-night TV also harks back to early kabuki performances, which commonly presented fashionable lifestyles and trends and gave the news of the day—especially news of the "gay" quarters, the "floating world" of Edo. Indeed, the word *kabuki* comes from the verb *kabuku*, "to deviate." Late-night TV continues the kabuki tradition by airing the "deviant" but keeping it playful.

Host Takajin entertains a guest on the weekend talk show Takajin's Bar.

The top late-night show is *Tonight II* (トゥナイトII), which, as the title suggests, is a newer version of *Tonight*, one of the oldest late shows in Japan. If our above-mentioned American parents in Tokyo had seen *Tonight II* in their *TV Gaido* (TVガイド), they may have assumed that this was the Japanese edition of Johnny Carson's *Tonight Show*, perhaps renamed with the coming of Jay Leno. But comedy does not translate well, and those who spend any time in Japan at all soon realize that the Japanese are far less hooked on political or cultural satire than we are in the US.

Tuning in to *Tonight II*, we see a group of men and women seated around a semi-circular table. On the far left is a woman whose job is to smile, nod, and say *hai* ("yes") to whatever the host on her left says. The other participants are "reporters"; they take turns introducing a topic, which alternates between hot gossip, hotter "live" scenes, and then, like a cold shower, some useful information. The reporters are not specialists—a fairly common occurrence on Japanese television—and the way they report on sexual entertainment, the latest love hotels, and the newest fashions in sexy clothing is disarmingly naive. *Tonight II* and similar shows rarely have the autocratic, Hefneresque, "This is how sex and pleasure is—period" point of view.

While the original *Tonight* was unrelenting in its focus on sexual play, *Tonight II* has broadened its coverage considerably. A television executive for a local station claims that the reason for the change is simple: late-night TV directors and their late-night sponsors cater to the young, and the young were flocking to cable (i.e., soft porn from the US and Brazil). *Tonight II* was thus modernized a decade or so by giving women a more active role and parceling out some of the cold-shower segments to men. In a recent show, for example, a woman gave a documentary-like presentation on Shinjuku 2-chōme, the gay and lesbian center of Japan, while a man gave tips on cheap apartments for students in Tokyo. The segment on Shinjuku was presented with maps, diagrams, interviews, and "live" scenes too racy to be described here. In the apartment segment we learned that there is a nice closet-

TV Guides

In Japan, a country with the dubious distinction of rivaling the US in terms of television viewing, TV-related magazines proliferate, to put it mildly. The most popular is a copy-cat version of the American *TV Guide*. It is the same size and has the same high standards as the US version, and is called, naturally enough, *TV Gaido*. This is joined by such weekly and monthly works as *TV Bros.*, *Stera*, *TV Station*, *TV Pia*, *Za Terebijon*, *TV Taro*, and *TV Cosmos*. All of these magazines exploit the private lives of television stars, print the words to the latest theme songs, and publish strategies for losing weight, getting rid of zits, and so on. In the end, there is very little room given to the actual listings themselves.

• demeaning treatment 侮辱的な扱い *bujoku-teki na atsukai* • ornate 華麗な *karei na* • gay quarters 遊郭 *yūkaku* • satire 風刺 *fūshi* • Hefneresque (米プレイボーイ社創始者ヒュー・ヘフナー式の *(Bei Pureiboi-sha soshisha Hyu) Hefunā-shiki no* • proliferate まん延する *man'en suru* • zits にきび *nikibi*

News That's Fit To See

Especially since the Persian Gulf War, there has been a minor revolution in news programming in Japan. One reason the Gulf War was significant for TV was that the time zones of Atlanta, Baghdad, and Tokyo matched in such a way that news channeled through CNN Atlanta out of Baghdad came first to news shows in Tokyo around 10:00 PM. The most popular of these shows is *Nyūsu Sutēshon* (ニュースステーション, "News Station"), which is setting standards for news in Japan. Most notably, for the first time on a major network news show, a woman, Komiya Etsuko, is allowed to say something besides *hai* (although, admittedly, she says this a lot). Another development is *Chikushi Tetsuya Nyūsu 23* (筑紫哲也ニュース２３, "News at 11 with Chikushi Tetsuya"), which is also breaking new TV ground by reserving a segment for critical views. The revolutionary nature of this segment in Japan, where frank and straightforward expression of personal views is uncommon, is suggested by the disclaimer that precedes it: "Just five minutes!" No doubt, people feel criticism could not be stomached for any longer than that. Needless to say, programs dedicated to investigating the corruption of public officials or underhanded deals of the *keiretsu* are basically taboo, both for traditional reasons and also, probably, because everyone knows that it's going on and accepts it as a part of life. Just like the sex on the other channels.

size rental going for just ¥25,000 a month.

Although typical of many late-night shows, *Tonight II* is certainly not the limit. The boundary of what is airable is constantly being pushed back, then halted by the censors, and then pushed back some more. One example is the recently canceled *EX-Terebi* (EXテレビ, "Ex-television"), whose orientation could be gleaned from the "S" (ostensibly for "stereo") that appeared to the left of the EX in TV guides. What was "stereo" about the show, besides the commercials, was that it gave a split screen showing news on one side and a sexual act on the other. No explanation has been given for why the show was taken off the air, but if history is any guide, it will soon be replaced by an *EX-EX-Terebi*.

Weekend late-night fare represents a departure from that shown during the week, but it is no less titillating. Most prevalent is a type of talk show in which the participants meet in unusual settings. An example is *Takajin no Bā* (たかじん no ばぁー, "Takajin's Bar"), where, interspersed between scenes of sex and other covert activities, people on the fringes of society come and talk with Takajin, the bartender, about their strange lifestyles and unconventional opinions. The most common guests are transvestites, but another clear

• cannot be stomached 耐えられない／我慢できない *taerarenai/gaman dekinai* • censors 検閲官 *ken'etsu-kan* • ostensibly 表向きは *omotemuki wa* • titillating 刺激的な *shigeki-teki na* • transvestites 服装倒錯者 *fukusō tōsaku-sha*

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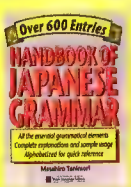

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favorite is Japanese-speaking foreigners, especially blacks. It is a kind of plotless *Cheers*, except that instead of satire on the problems of daily life and human relations, there is exaggeration, delivered with slapstick punctuality, on the stereotypes of the characters. Incidentally, the whiskey isn't fake.

If this type of programming is offending anyone, it certainly isn't obvious. To the contrary, such shows are proliferating, and being broadcast earlier and earlier. For example, *Tōkō! Tokuho Ōkoku* (投稿！特ホウ王国, "Contributions! News Flash Kingdom"), a believe-it-or-not show in which the strangest act wins a prize, airs on Sunday nights from 7:00 to 8:00. One recent segment centered on *oppai āto* (オッパイアート, "breast art"); in it, a woman painted Munch's "The Scream" live, using her breast as a paintbrush. She didn't win. In another program in the same time slot on Thursdays, *Kamioka Ryūtarō ga Zubari* (上岡龍太郎がズバリ, "Kamioka Ryūtarō, Frankly Speaking"), 50 people who have had forbidden sexual experiences or gay or lesbian lifestyles are gathered together in a room and asked intimate questions by a panel of TV *tarento* (タレント, "talents"), led by Kamioka, who was one of the hosts of *EX-Terebi*. In a recent skit on one of the most popular shows currently on TV, the comedy program *Dauntaun no Gottsu E Kanji* (ダウンタウンのごっつええ感じ, "Feeling Fine With Downtown"), airing from 8:00 to 9:00 PM, two male "deer" were shown apparently raping a "doe." While this was going on, a half-chicken, half-cow creature came along and said, "What are you doing?" to which one of the rapists retorted, "What are *you* doing?" The creature said, "I don't know" and walked on. This interchange, delivered in an exaggerated Kansai dialect, was greeted with uproarious laughter—and no complaints.

The alternatives to shows like *Tonight II*, *Takajin no Bā*, and *Dauntaun* are mostly dedicated to sports and gossip. *Donmai!! Supōtsu & Waido* (どんまい！！スポーツ＆ワイド, "Don't Mind!! Sports and Wide"), for example, keeps the baseball faithful awake until 12:40 each night. In addition to presenting the latest stats on baseball and sumo heroes, it gives a clear, penetrating view into their private lives (in TV parlance, *waido* means "a wide net that catches all gossip"). There are also programs, like *Dachōn Kurabu* (ダチョーン倶楽部, "Crash Club," from 11:25 to 11:55), that present unusual sports and games, such as skiing on frying pans or seeing who can hang longest from a giant icicle. These usually involve some pain and are produced on an even shorter shoestring than other Japanese TV shows.

Here and there amid the live, sweat-filled broadcasts of sex and sports, one

Early-Morning Terebi

Early-morning Japanese television contrasts sharply with late-night programming. The fare is easygoing and wholesome, while many of the commercials are for volunteer agencies (begging us to be kind and generous) or for industrial arts exhibits.

There are a great many Kansas-style farm shows and Maineish fishing programs. Several stations also carry shows with *terakoya* (寺子屋) in their titles. Terakoya were Buddhist temple schools, the predecessors of public schools in Japan. On television, the Terakoya programs are short lessons broadcast from local public schools or similar settings. The shows have themes such as *yasashisa ippai* (優しさ一杯, "full of gentleness"), and, true to their aim, teach about children's literature, the life of crickets, and similar kind subjects. The shows are slow and low, seemingly expecting the average morning brain to function at half-speed and perhaps with a headache. In other words, they are ideal for foreigners trying to learn Japanese.

• slapstick どたばた喜劇風の *dotabata kigeki fū no* • believe-it-or-not show 珍奇な事実紹介番組 *chindan kidan shōkai bangumi* • dialect 方言 *hōgen* • stats = statistics 統計 *tōkei* • デー タ *dēta* • parlance 用語 *yōgo* • icicle つらら *tsurara* • shoestring ごくわずかな予算 *goku wazuka na yosan* • predecessors of public schools 公立学校ができる以前の大衆教育機関 *koritsu gakkō ga dekiru izen no taishū kyōiku kikan* • crickets コオロギ *kōrogi*

does find attempts to engage the minds, rather than the bodies, of the hard workers of Japan, Inc. *Asa Made Nama Terebi* (朝まで生テレビ, "Live Until Morning TV"), airing from 1:00 to 5:00 AM on the last Friday of every month, might be described as a debate that follows a "Robert's Rules of Disorder." The title of most segments begins with the word *gekiron* (激論, "heated debate"), although "pitched battle" seems a more apt description. Usually two sides of a current topic (e.g., "Are Bureaucrats Destroying Japan?") are represented by bitter enemies. Typically of late-night TV, most of the panelists are famous, but not necessarily as experts on the chosen topic. What they lack in expertise, however, they make up for in sentiment and stamina. The mild-mannered moderator tries his best to keep the *wa* (和, "harmony"), but to no avail: the debaters argue more and more furiously, habitually coming close to blows. If there is a show on TV that presents the "other side" of the soft-spoken salaryman, this is it.

Those who prefer a little less excitement might tune in to NHK, the public television network. NHK has two stations, one for general programming and the other for educational shows. On a given night, while *Tonight II* is informing us of the latest in G-string fashions, NHK may be airing a documentary on 19th-century wooden toys on one station and a lesson in elementary Russian on the other. In addition, there are also some very high quality news programs, such as *Nyūsu Sutēshon* (see sidebar on page 17). But this is, after all, late night, and it's more in tune with tradition to get relaxed nearly nude.

It's 10:00 on Monday night and as we zap our way around the 15 or so channels we suddenly see a zany woman in despair. A housewife living in a three-generation family, she appears to be a modern Sazae-san—but she acts nothing like the animated "shell" of the cartoon. Indeed, this Sazae commits adultery once a week. It is her only means of breaking free from the stifling constraints of a tradition-bound life. The show is called *Gaman Dekinai* (我慢できない、"I Can't Take It Any More!"), and no doubt strikes a sympathetic chord among many people who are watching it, but who also feel that once seen it does not have to be done. It is a paradox of TV that we can feel as if we are in the middle of everything without ever moving from the coach, or the tatami. And whether we are viewing a police shootout in LA or a sex scene on the Ginza, it is always satisfying to know that we can simply turn it off.

Andy Jones is a freelance writer and the representative in Japan for Boston's Northeast Broadcasting School. He lives in Hiroshima.

• pitched battle 激戦 *gekisen* • come to blows 殴り合いに及ぶ *naguriai ni oyobu* • come close to blows もう少しで殴り合いのけんかをしそうになる *mō sukoshi de naguriai no kenka o shisō ni naru* • zap チャンネルを変える *channeru o kaeru* • aptly 適切に *tekisetsu ni*

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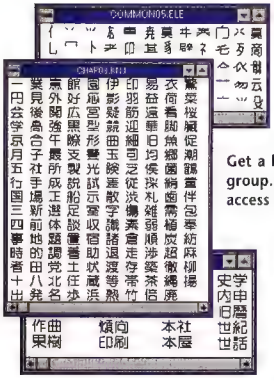
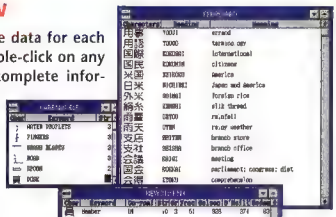


TABLE VIEW

Focus in on detailed reference data for each of the items in a group. Double-click on any item to instantly access its complete information profile in card view.



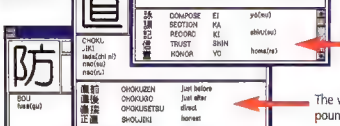
LIST VIEW

Get a bird's-eye view of the items in a group. Double-click on any item to access its card view information profile.

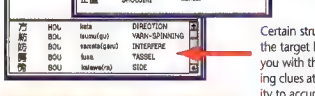
CARD VIEW

Here's where the power of the methodology takes shape. The elements, kanji, or compounds in a group are transformed into a deck of turbo-charged flash cards. Flip back and forth through the cards in sequence, or jump around in random order. Quiz yourself by selectively hiding and revealing areas on the cards. When you master a card, pull it from the deck, and keep going until you've mastered them all. Switch between the four lists of additional information described below at the touch of a button. When you see an element, kanji, or compound in card view, you have at your fingertips everything you need in order to tattoo its structure, readings, and meanings into your brain forever. It's just-in-time learning taken to its full potential.

The component building blocks, which comprise the target item, along with their keywords and primary readings, in the order in which they are written. Mentally create a vivid image (and corresponding phrase or story line) which ties together the keyword of the target item and the keywords of its respective components. Focus on that image for a few seconds, and the structure of the target kanji or element is yours forever. Sound crazy? Try it. It works like magic



The kanji and elements which contain the target item, along with their keywords and readings. After you've mastered the target item and its components, learning any of the items in this list would be a natural next step



The words which contain the target item, along with their readings and meanings. Useful, commonly occuring compounds have been chosen specifically to ease the process of memorizing the *on-yomi* readings of the kanji they contain.

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PICTURE BRIDE:

An American Film with a Japanese Sensibility

by Terra Brockman

Hiroyuki Hoshi

Director Kayo Hatta on the set of Picture Bride

"History," said the French writer François LaRochefoucauld, "never embraces more than a small part of reality." To tell the larger part of reality—the stories that seldom make their way into the history books—we need poetry, novels, art, and film.

Kayo Hatta, director of one of the first full-length dramatic feature films by an Asian American woman (and perhaps the first film to involve a collaboration of Asian American women writers, director, and producers), knows this. She says of her film *Picture Bride*, "I wanted to find an evocative way to tell history." Hatta, who with her sister Mari wrote the screenplay for the film, has succeeded in bringing to life a rarely told slice of Japanese and American history—that of the more than 19,000 women who between 1907 and 1924 left their homes and families in Japan and boarded ships for the unknown islands of Hawaii.

Fine Heter

Kudoh Youki (left) as the heroine Riyo, and Tamlyn Tomita as her best friend, Kana

Clinging to small photographs and large dreams, these young women (their average age was 17) made the long crossing to meet husbands who were typically 15 to 20 years older than them. This was the first rude shock of their new lives, which also included arduous physical labor, exploitation, and racism. On the other hand, they found joy in Hawaii's great natural beauty and in deep and lasting friendships.

In *Picture Bride*, the Hawaiian-born Hatta sisters tell the story of one of these women, Riyo. She is played by the winsome Kudoh Youki, who made her American film debut in Jim Jarmusch's *Mystery Train* and won the 1991 best actress award in Japan for *Sensō to Seishun*. The film opens with a pre-credit sequence in the beautiful sepia tones of photographs of the last century. The camera plays slowly and softly over the clean lines of a traditional Japanese home and over the smooth faces of Riyo and her aunt.

Riyo is quietly reading a note from Matsuji (Takayama Akira), her husband-to-be, who is a laborer in the sugar cane plantations of Hawaii. Far from Japan and far from the eyes and ears of neighbors and relatives, Matsuji appears to Riyo's aunt as a perfect match for her niece, whose mother and father have died from tuberculosis. Riyo's parents' legacy, the stigma of contagion (like the stigma of AIDS today), is nearly fatal to her marriage prospects. First, there will be little or no dowry, and second, the dreaded tuberculosis may be lurking just below the healthy surface, ready to kill the woman just when she is needed most by her husband and children. Distance has its advantages, and so Riyo's aunt successfully arranges the marriage.

As Riyo and her cohort of picture brides, some in kimono, some in high-necked western dresses, disembark and step onto Hawaiian soil, the film switches into color to capture the lushness of the new world. Ever since *The Wizard of Oz*, this has seemed a hackneyed device, but it works well here. The Hawaii the women have landed in is paradisaical, with seas of waving sugar cane, rust-red soil, wide blue skies, and a profusion of orchids and other bright flowers. All of this scenery is captured beautifully by Mexican cinematographer Claudio Rocha (*Like Water for Chocolate*), whose work adds a magical realist tone.

(continued on page 59)

• arduous 非常に骨の折れる／困難な *hijō ni hone no orera/konnan na* • pre credit sequence 出演者名などが出る前の出だしのシーン *shutsuensha-mei ga deru mae no dedashi no shin* • cohort 一団／グループ *ichidan/gurupu* • hackneyed device 使い古された手法 *tsukai-furusareta shuho* • cinematographer 映画撮影技師 *eiga satsuei gishi* • poignant 心を打つ／痛々しい *kokoro o utsu/itutashii*

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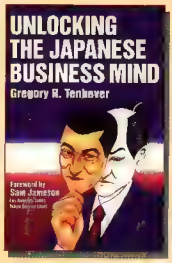

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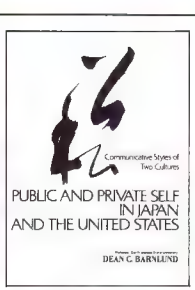

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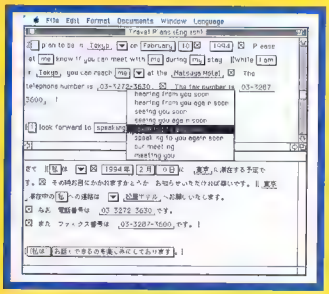

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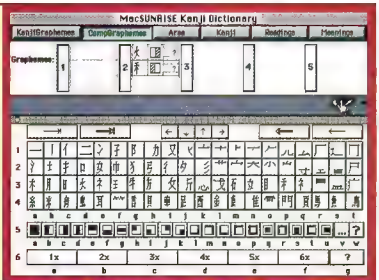

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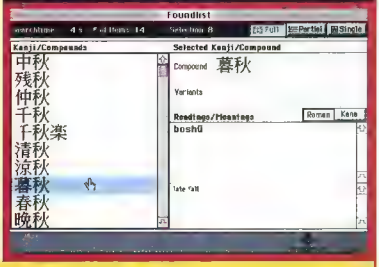

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Life *with* Liz

A host mother fondly recalls how the arrival of an American exchange student affected her family.

by Fusako Okada

Enjoying tea with Liz

Our first contact with Liz was through an airmail letter. Her letter impressed us as it was written all in beautiful Japanese even with kanji. A few days after that, we were surprised again by the arrival of huge packages which we couldn't lift. All of us were very curious about the contents but we had to wait for her to open them.

Before her arrival, we went to a department store to buy an extra-large futon and a long pillow which were familiar to us from American TV programs. (We later found out that the bedding we prepared was not necessary as Liz was a small girl, the height of the average Japanese.) Host families were asked by Eurocentre to use as much Japanese as possible when communicating with students because their purpose in visiting Kanazawa was to study the language. Liz was one of the 14 Dartmouth College students on the intensive language program in Kanazawa. My husband was still nervous about communicating with her and bought a Sharp electronic translator in secret. Now we were all ready to see her.

My husband and I went together to pick her up. Liz looked nervous and stiff in front of us. We tried hard to make her feel comfortable in the car on our way home, but the more we talked, the more tense she looked. She later explained that she had been upset to find that the Japanese we used was totally different from what she had learned in class. We introduced our family members to her. Our father (called "Ojii-san" at home) who was 87 years old, our 12-year-old daughter, and our 18-year-old son, the most fun of all. She showed us a shy smile for the first time then. Our oldest daughter was studying at Osaka University and arranged to come back home for the holidays to see her.

She started unpacking in her room. We gathered around the packages to see what was inside. The first things were 10 pairs of shoes! Then her stuffed toy animal, and a collection of clothes. We had the impression that she had brought clothes suitable for any occasion, but she still wanted to buy a party dress. We visited many shops and department stores for her party dress but in vain.

Because of our aged Ojii-san (literally "grandfather"), we cook traditional Japanese meals consisting of vegetables and fish every day. Liz liked what I cooked as she believed these foods were good for her diet. One of her favorites was "harumaki" (spring roll) which is of Chinese origin. She didn't leave anything on her plate, but I am not sure whether she was forcing her-

self or not. She also drank a lot of tap water as she thought it tasted very good.

Her lifestyle made us compare college life in America with that of the Japanese. We feel sorry for our children who are under constant pressure without knowing how to relax. Liz and her classmates studied hard generally, but once they completed homework or tests, they knew the way to enjoy life fully.

She left for school at around 8:00 every morning, after watching the ABC news on a satellite program. It is about a 30-minute bike ride from our house to the Eurocentre Kanazawa which is just in the center of the city. She was not too happy about the bad traffic conditions in Japan, but there was no way for us to help her.

Our dining table became more lively after she joined us. For Ojii-san, it was a good mental exercise again to use the English he had learned about 70 years ago. My husband tried to come home from work much earlier to join us. (Until then he was the typical Japanese white-collar worker who is more loyal to his company than to his family. He often ate away from home with his customers and came back home late.) We talked a lot together over a cup of tea after dinner, and Liz acted as a gateway to the outside world for us. Everything she said about her life in America sounded much more real to us than from other sources such as TV and radio. Once in a while, we had to use a dictionary to make sure, but it was fun in a way to imagine what the other person intended to say.

Her thoughtfulness and good manners are what we want our children to learn, and we sometimes wondered if there were anything she could learn from us. Two months with her passed much more quickly than we had thought. She phoned us immediately after returning home to America. After all of the family members talked with her on the phone, Ojii-san muttered to himself, "I can't die until I see her in a wedding dress."

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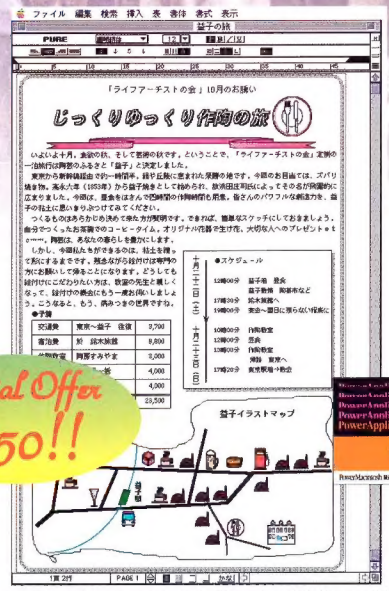

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